

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 91

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 26

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 91—Relative to Autism Awareness Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 2, 2010.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 91, Steinberg. Autism Awareness Month.

This measure would designate April 2010 as Autism Awareness Month, would affirm the Legislature's commitment to the important issues related to autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), would emphasize that each and every individual with an ASD is a valued and important member of our society, would recognize and commend the parents and relatives of individuals with ASDs for their sacrifice and dedication in providing for the special needs of individuals with ASDs, would recognize and commend the work of all nonprofit organizations that are contributing to the well-being of individuals with autism and their families, and would stress the need to identify children with ASDs and to begin early intervention services immediately after a child has been diagnosed with an ASD.

WHEREAS, Autism is a complex, neurobiological disorder that typically lasts throughout a person's lifetime. Autism is part of a group of disorders known as autism spectrum disorders (ASDs); and

WHEREAS, ASDs are neurodevelopmental disorders of unknown etiology that may cause significant impairments in language, communications, and social interactions, abnormalities in behaviors, and other physical manifestations; and

WHEREAS, ASDs are abnormalities of brain development and function that are typically diagnosed during the first three years of life, are four times more likely to occur in males than females, and impact all segments of California's population regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other factors; and

WHEREAS, ASDs now impact one out of every 100 children in the United States and are the fastest growing serious developmental disabilities, making these disorders more common than pediatric cancer, diabetes, and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) combined; and

WHEREAS, Most school districts in California have seen a doubling of students with ASDs in the past five years. The number of Californians with ASDs who are served by the State Department of Developmental Services now exceeds 40,000, which is a number that has more than tripled since 1998 and has increased more than 12 times from what it was in 1987; and

WHEREAS, Many Californians are not adequately informed about ASDs and the value and importance of early identification, assessment, and treatment of these disorders; and

WHEREAS, Parents and family members have made invaluable contributions through their commitment, care, and advocacy to important advances in research, education, and treatment for individuals with ASDs; and

WHEREAS, California has been the established leader in providing services and supports for the early identification, assessment, intervention, education, and treatment of individuals with ASDs that began with the passage of landmark state legislation such as the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Service Act of 1969 and Assembly Bill 3854 (Chapter 1527 of the Statutes of 1974), relating to autism and public education; and

WHEREAS, In 2005, Senator Perata authored Senate Concurrent Resolution 51 (Resolution Chapter 124 of the Statutes of 2005) that established, with bipartisan backing, the Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism; and

WHEREAS, In 2007, the Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism submitted its report, “An Opportunity to Achieve Real Change for Californians with Autism Spectrum Disorders,” which provided specific findings and recommendations; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, Senator Steinberg authored Senate Concurrent Resolution 97 (Resolution Chapter 62 of the Statutes of 2008) that proclaimed April 2008 as Autism Awareness Month, and acknowledged the contributions made in the area of early autism and ASD intervention treatment; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, Senator Price, who at the time was a member of the Assembly, authored Assembly Concurrent Resolution 53 (Resolution Chapter 30 of the Statutes of 2009) that proclaimed April 2009 as Autism Awareness Month and noted the important sacrifices and dedication that parents and relatives of individuals with ASDs contribute in providing for the special needs of individuals with ASDs; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, the Senate Committee on Rules, pursuant to Senate Rule 12.5, established a subcommittee of the General Research Committee known as the Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders; and

WHEREAS, The Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders has appointed regional autism taskforces that are comprised of consumers and their family members, advocates, providers, researchers, and other experts in the area of ASDs, and other stakeholders, to provide assistance to, and to support the work of, the select committee. Senator Steinberg, as Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders, has established the Statewide Coordinating Council of Autism Taskforces that will consist of the chairs and cochairs of the regional autism taskforces and will meet periodically to review the input from all of the regional autism taskforces and develop integrated recommendations for

consideration by the Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders; and

WHEREAS, Current scientific research demonstrates that early identification of and intervention for children with ASDs can result in significant positive outcomes in many children with ASDs; and

WHEREAS, Public information and awareness efforts are of paramount importance in accelerating early identification efforts and the proliferation of early intervention programs and services; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature designates April 2010 as Autism Awareness Month, affirms its commitment to the important issues related to ASDs, and emphasizes that each and every individual with an ASD is a valued and important member of our society; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature recognizes and commends the parents and relatives of individuals with ASDs for their sacrifice and dedication in providing for the special needs of individuals with ASDs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature recognizes and commends the work of all of the nonprofit organizations that are contributing to the well-being of individuals with autism and their families; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature stresses the need to identify children with ASDs and to begin early intervention services immediately after a child has been diagnosed with autism, and that those services, interventions, and supports for individuals with ASDs and their families must be provided in an integrated, seamless, comprehensive, and competent manner; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.